UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/140/Add.1
7 November 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fiftieth session
Item 118

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with article 9, paragraph 2, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the work programme of the Unit for 1995-1996, the indicative list for 1996-1997 and beyond, and the internal roster.

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Annex

WORK PROGRAMME OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT FOR 1995-1996, INDICATIVE LIST FOR 1996-1997 AND BEYOND AND INTERNAL ROSTER

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The following work programme has been drawn up in accordance with article 9, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 31/192 of 22 December 1976 and takes into account the guidelines laid out in Assembly resolutions 42/218 of 21 December 1987, 44/184 of 19 December 1989 and 45/237 of 21 December 1990, decision 46/446 of 20 December 1991, resolution 47/201 of 22 December 1992 and resolution 48/221 of 23 December 1993. The work programme is divided into two sections: section II lists the JIU work programme for 1995-1996, section III contains an indicative list of issues which the Unit has identified as potential subjects to be dealt with after the completion of the ongoing reports, and section IV comprises a roster of suggestions which are before JIU for consideration as subjects that might be taken up in the medium term. As hitherto, the work programme is subject to change in the course of the year: new reports may be added; planned reports may be modified, postponed or cancelled when circumstances warrant; and titles may be changed to reflect the new thrust of reports.

2. The current JIU annual report cycle is July to June, while the work programme previously covered the period January to December. Since most legislative organs of participating organizations meet between the summer and autumn seasons, there was a lack of synchronization between the calendars of meetings of participating organizations and the JIU work programme. To avoid this discrepancy, the Inspectors have decided to shift the work programme cycle from January to December to July to June. The main purpose of this decision was to spread out the inspections, investigations and evaluations contained in the work programme throughout the new cycle, and thus even out the workload to the extent possible in order to ensure the timely presentation of JIU reports to the pertinent legislative organs, especially to the General Assembly. Consequently, the present work programme should be regarded as transitional, and will overlap somewhat with the JIU work programme for 1995.

II. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1995-1996

A. Reports on management, budgetary and administrative issues

1. Common services at Geneva

3. This is the second part of a general study on common services, the first part of which, issued in 1995, dealt with common services in New York. The Inspectors aim at examining the various services used in the Geneva-based organizations, and how they are utilized - either in an isolated way or in a common endeavour - and what could be improved.

2. Use of information technology in the United Nations system

4. This investigation/evaluation - which stems from several sources, among them the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization - will entail a comparative review of the use of information technology in the participating organizations, the application of technological innovations, and their consequent effective use. The main objective will be to investigate means for the improvement of the use of information technology in place, with a view to optimizing the use of present resources. This could entail recommending potential standard information systems where feasible and presenting alternatives where appropriate.

3. Streamlining the United Nations Secretariat

5. This report was suggested by the United Nations Secretariat. The main objectives will be to examine the streamlining process within the United Nations Secretariat; to analyse the management of this process; and to recommend concrete action-oriented measures aimed at ensuring that the Organization would achieve better results even with fewer staff at less cost.

4. Contracting out in the United Nations system

6. The objective of this investigation is to identify areas within the United Nations Secretariat and other secretariats of participating organizations where greater use of contracting out of various support activities would result in cost-saving while keeping or improving the outputs both in quality and quantity.

7. During the last few years, both Governments and the private sector have greatly increased the out-sourcing of activities, which has brought about good results. In this connection, the Inspectors intend to analyse and recommend guiding principles that should be observed in contracting-out decisions and suggest specific action-oriented measures aimed at making greater use of this practice in the United Nations system.

5. Review of the financial resources being devoted to activities of non-governmental organizations by the United Nations and its organizations and the specialized agencies

8. In 1993 JIU issued a report entitled "Working with non-governmental organizations: operational activities for development of the United Nations system with non-governmental organizations and Governments at the grassroots and national levels" (JIU/REP/93/1). This new review intends to present, on an organization-by-organization basis, the funds being allocated to non-governmental organization collaboration/activities against the amount of funds allocated for administering these activities and/or programmes in terms of number of staff, their grading, salaries, etc. The report would also attempt to identify the nature of the funds provided.

B. Reports on operational activities for development

6. Strengthening field representation and operations in the context of the decentralization of organizations within the United Nations system

9. The objective is to ascertain the reality of recent declarations throughout the system on strengthening field operations at the expense of Headquarters responsibilities and resources. Although this is a strong wish of Governments, many organizations find it difficult, because of diminishing resources, even to maintain their existing field presence. Perhaps the solution is not to allocate more resources to individual organizations but to opt for the United Nations system unitary approach, as repeatedly requested by Governments.

10. This review should be regarded as a follow-up to previous JIU reports entitled "Decentralization of organizations within the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/92/6), "Field representation of United Nations system organizations: a more unitary approach" (JIU/REP/92/8) and "Review and assessment of efforts to restructure the regional dimension of United Nations economic and social activities" (JIU/REP/94/6), intended to update the developments at both secretariat and intergovernmental levels on this subject.

7. Coordination of development cooperation policy frameworks

11. The Joint Inspection Unit will assess the effectiveness of the different development cooperation policy frameworks, methods and mechanisms of the organizations of the United Nations system and seek out ways and means of achieving, or working towards a more effective framework that could be suitably used by the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and bilateral donors in their support for the developing countries in a more coherent manner.

8. Assessment of the restructuring of the economic, social and related sectors of the United Nations

12. The report will survey and assess the recent restructuring of the economic and social sectors within the United Nations Secretariat. It will investigate and evaluate the current situation, with a view to assessing its efficiency, effectiveness and impact. Consideration will also be given to ideas that have been put forward but not implemented either from within or outside the United Nations system. The objectives therefore are (a) to survey and assess previous attempts; (b) to examine the current situation; and (c) to contribute towards a more relevant and cost-saving structure.

9. Evaluation of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

13. This evaluation intends to be forward-looking in concentrating on the future role of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in accordance with its mandate. It will be based on an in-depth review of the

experience of UNCTAD over the past 30 years and an analysis of its comparative advantages in the context of a globalizing and liberalizing world economy, and of the role of the World Trade Organization.

C. Peace-keeping and related operations

10. Coordination at Headquarters and the field level, within the framework of "An Agenda for Peace", among the United Nations organizations in peace-building: an assessment of the possibilities

14. The Inspectors will investigate the best possibilities and modalities for better coordinating peace-building activities at Headquarters and in the field; will propose structures of work which would facilitate such coordination; and will review the ongoing programmes and activities of United Nations organizations in the field of peace-building, in particular in conflict prevention and resolution.

D. Humanitarian assistance

11. Execution of humanitarian assistance programmes through government agencies and non-governmental organizations ("implementing partners")

15. The objective of the report will be to contribute to clarifying the criteria governing legal, administrative, financial and reporting relationships between donor organizations and implementing partners. It will cover all organizations involved in one way or another in humanitarian assistance programmes and utilizing implementing partners.

III. INDICATIVE LIST OF POTENTIAL ITEMS FOR 1996-1997 AND BEYOND

16. The following are indications of subjects of inspection, investigation and evaluation, in the four priority areas of the current JIU work programme, which the Inspectors intend to pursue during the course of 1996-1997 and beyond. Most of these subjects are requested by the legislative organs or suggested by the secretariats of the participating organizations, while others are generated internally. The list is tentative and does not necessarily imply that JIU is firmly committed to taking up these subjects.

A. Management, budgetary and administrative issues

1. Investigation of the Centre for Human Rights.

2. System-wide review on ways to improve programming methodology.

3. System-wide review of planning, programming and budgeting procedures.

4. Use of experts and consultants.

5. Status of agreements between host countries and United Nations Headquarters and specialized agencies system-wide.

B. Operational activities for development

6. Analysis of the number, size and cost of conferences, seminars, workshops and other meetings and gatherings in the technical cooperation programmes of the United Nations system.

7. Relationship between the funding agencies of the United Nations system and the United Nations Secretariat, particularly regional commissions and the United Nations Population Fund.

8. Financial and administrative implications of a meaningful presence of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and activities in the net contributions countries.

C. Peace-keeping and related operations

9. Peace-keeping operations office and living-quarters camps: budgeting, procurement, management and removal from one mission and reinstallation in another mission.

IV. INTERNAL ROSTER

A. Management, budgetary and administrative issues

1. Inspection of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

2. Review of procurement policies and procedures.

3. Improvement of the marketing of United Nations revenue-producing activities.

B. Operational activities for development

4. Cooperation between global environment facility implementing agencies and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

5. Effectiveness and efficiency of alternative development - supply-reduction and demand-reduction programmes of UNDP and its relationship to other technical, economic and social projects of the United Nations system.

6. Inspection of the Economic Commission for Europe.

7. Impact of new UNDP support cost agreements.

8. Evaluation of "agenda 90".

C. Peace-keeping and related operations

9. Analysis of the resources devoted to peace-keeping emergencies and disaster relief programmes, compared with regular economic and social development assistance.